



Encyclopaedia Aristasiana

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Rationalism

"We do not disparage the Artisan; only the fool who would crown her Empress." — Platina on Rationalism
(*The Artisan* here means reason.)

The Aristasian critique of rationalism has sometimes led superficial critics to suppose that Aristasia is anti-rational or irrational

It is important to distinguish between rationality and rationalism. They are two very different things: and ultimately they are opposed to each other.

Rationality means the use of reason. Reason is the God-given power of organising facts and ideas. The main use of reason is to organise, and draw conclusions from, the information provided by the five senses (sense-data).

Reason, according to traditional thought, is the lunar faculty. It is the reflection of the Solar Intellect. Through the Solar Intellect are perceived the Eternal Verities, the Truths of metaphysics and spiritual Reality. All traditional Tellurian teachers — Plato, the Buddha, Lao-Tzu, Sri Sankara and countless others — have taught the importance of this Solar Intellect, though they have called it by different names.

Rationalism is a dogma that first arose in the 17th century. It declares that the sense-data plus the lunar reason are *the only sources of knowledge available to maid*. In so doing, it repudiates the intellectuality of all past ages and claims a monopoly of truth for its own narrow, materialistic outlook.

It is important to understand that rationalism is not itself rational. Rationalism cannot be derived from the reason. It is an arbitrary dogma. And yet it is upon this dogma that the outlook of the post 17th-century Western world has based itself.

The most concise statement of rationalism is that made by the Logical Positivists who say that "A statement that is not either synthetic (derived from the sense-data) or analytic (derived from the action of the reason upon the sense-data)

is literally meaningless."

It should be noted that the statement "A statement that is neither synthetic nor analytic is literally meaningless" is itself neither synthetic nor analytic. This exposes the inherent self-contradiction of rationalism.

Rationalism and Technics

In Telluria, the "scientific revolution" and subsequent "industrial revolution" were founded upon the 17th century "Enlightenment", which might well be termed the "rationalist revolution", or the acceptance of the arbitrary dogma of rationalism as not only true, but as the foundation for all thought.

In Aristasia no such rationalist revolution took place, and while technics have developed very rapidly in Western Aristasia, they are not founded on a revolutionary or anti-traditional outlook. On the contrary, modern science is seen to be the continuation and elaboration of traditional science, not a rejection of it.

Traditional science takes the Spirit and the axioms of the Solar Intellect as its starting-point. So, for example, while Tellurian "modern science" sees the traditional cosmos, with the spheres of the seven planets about a fixed earth, as being "disproved", Aristasian science understands that, since the sublunary world is the world of matter, even the furthest flung galaxies are, properly speaking, beneath the sphere of the moon.

In other words, Tellurian science, having forgotten the Principles upon which traditional science is founded, interprets it in an absurdly literalistic manner and then rejects the caricature so produced. It assumes that no cosmology can ever have been talking about anything beyond literalist materialism.

Aristasian cosmology, on the other hand, recognises the primacy of the traditional view of the cosmos, while accepting the literal and material view as valid on its own, secondary, level. On this basis, space travel has been made possible by Novarian technicians.

The co-existence and complementarity of the two aspects of science, modern (though non-revolutionary) and traditional, in Aristasian thought is illustrated in depth in *A Sermon in Outer Space*.

In Telluria the success of technics is often taken as a sort of quasi-"proof" of the validity of the Rationalist-Revolutionary ideology. In answer to this rather loose thinking, we should note the following:

1. James Watt "whose improvements to the steam engine

were fundamental to the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution" (Wikipedia) actually founded his work on theories of steam pressure that were later discovered to be incorrect.

The importance of this is that it illustrates the fact that a theory does not have to be *true* in order to be technically effective. It merely needs to provide a model that is accurately predictive to the extent required by the technical needs at hand.

We say this not in order to discredit the findings of material "science" but simply to illustrate the point that technical effectiveness has no bearing on questions of "truth". The success of a technique not only does not indicate the objective truth of the cultural ideology from which it emerges; it does not even necessarily indicate the objective truth of the particular theory on which the technique itself is based.

2. The contention that the Rationalist-Revolutionary ideology is necessary to the development of modern technics is disproved by many facts, for example by the invention of firearms, which transformed warfare completely. This took place in a culture that was, in the language of the progressist completely "static" (we would prefer "culturally stable") and untouched by even the prefiguring of a rationalist revolution: China. It was developed in another stable, traditionalist culture, the Indian. There is no doubt that over time this invention would have transformed warfare into something like its modern form.

It is true that the revolutionary West developed the potential of this invention more *rapidly* than the East, leading to the defeat of the Far East by superior Western guns (deployed on Lord Palmerston's gunboats in China and Admiral Perry's "black ships" in Japan) and that this led, in Japan, to the adoption of a quasi-Western culture precisely in order to emulate its rapid technical progress for defensive purposes. Nonetheless the technics were born in the East and would have come to full deployment there at a slower pace.

What is particularly interesting to the Aristasian student of history is that this invention in the East came a little before the movements leading to technical revolution in the West and without any of the accompanying rationalist ideology: indicating that the deployment of technics was essentially a product of that particular phase in the Historical Cycle and the necessary movement toward "horizontal" expansion on the material plane, rather than the "accidental" product of a particular cultural ideology.

Parabolic Explanation

The inherent irrationality of rationalism has also been explained in story-form as follows:

There is an old story told by Sai Platina in Aristasia and also by the great Tellurian teacher Plato. It tells of people who lie chained in a cave so that they are always looking at the wall of the cave. On that wall they see shadows and they spend their lives watching those shadows. One day a maid breaks free from the cave and goes outside to see the real things that are casting shadows on the wall.

Now that cave is the material world, and the shadows are the material things we see about us. Every tradition teaches that the material things we see are the shadows or reflections of higher things. Everything on earth has an Archetype, which is its true and perfect Form, of which the material entity is only an imperfect shadow.

The world of shadows is also called the sensible world because the shadows are the material things that we perceive with our physical senses - we see and hear and touch them.

The real things seen by the maid who left the cave is called the intelligible world, because the Pure Forms, or Archetypes, are not seen with the physical eyes, but with the Single Eye of the Intellect. They are seen by great contemplatives and saints, and they are also told about in myths and sacred books.

Now suppose one of the people still chained in the cave said to the maid who had left the cave:

"You are lying, there is nothing outside this cave."

"Why do you say that?" asks the maid who has left the cave.

"Because I have not seen it," replies the rationalist.

That is precisely what the doctrine of rationalism consists of: the illogical and arrogant denial that anything exists outside the material world of the five senses. Has she any rational reason for denying what all tradition tells her to be true? She has not. She merely repeats: "I have not seen it, so it does not exist."

That is why rationalism is inherently irrational: and, frankly, *naughty*. A world based on the rationalist denial of higher Reality is like a group of naughty children who have got together to deny what all the grown ups tell them because they have not seen it for themselves and cannot bear that anyone should know better than them.

Miss Alice Lucy Trent on Rationalism

Rationalism and rationality are by no means the same thing. People may mean different things by the term, but I am using it broadly to mean the doctrine which began gaining

force in Telluria in the 17th century that there is no source of knowledge other than the data supplied by our five physical senses and the analysis of that data by the reason.

All traditional societies have believed that there are also other ways of knowing and things that may be known that are not prehensible to the physical senses - from fairies to the truths of metaphysics which are known by the human Intellect (as opposed to mere reason) by its capacity to grasp Universal Truth.

This is attested to by the fact that the Universal Truths of the Intellect are (notwithstanding certain differences of spiritual "language") essentially the same in all known societies.

Rationalism is a denial of these truths based not on reason, but on a dogmatic assertion of the supremacy of reason over Intellect, which reason itself is by no means entitled to make. We may deny the existence of the prehensive Intellect and assert that no truth exists beyond the material, but if we do so, we are merely asserting our adherence to a creed, not following the dictates of reason.

An Aristasian should have every respect for reason, which is a wonderful faculty - but she should not elevate reason to a position beyond its natural competence, because - among other things - to do so is not rational.

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